United Nations A/56/895–S/2002/337

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
1 April 2002

Original: English

General Assembly
Fifty-sixth session
Agenda item 166
Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 1 April 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In the last six days, the Palestinian terrorist campaign against the citizens of Israel has reached dangerous new levels. Since my last letter to you, dated 27 March 2002, which described the horrific massacre that took place on the first night of Passover in the coastal Israeli city of Netanya, there have been four more suicide attacks in Israeli cities. Along with several other acts and attempted acts of terrorism, these attacks have altogether claimed the lives of 22 Israelis and wounded more than 100 others.

The most recent attack occurred yesterday, when a suicide bomber detonated powerful explosives in a crowded restaurant at 2.45 p.m. (Israel time) in the northern Israeli city of Haifa. The blast occurred at an hour when the restaurant was crowded with diners, killing 15 civilians, wounding more than 40 others and causing extensive physical damage. Two Israeli families — the Koren and Ron families — lost three members each in the blast. The terrorist organization Hamas claimed responsibility for the blast and vowed to continue to attack Israeli civilians.

Less than two hours later, another suicide bomber blew himself up outside the emergency medical centre in the Israeli city of Efrat. Six Israelis were wounded in the blast, at least two of them seriously. The Al Aksa Brigades, the terrorist wing of Chairman Arafat's own Fatah faction, claimed responsibility for the blast.

On Saturday evening at approximately 9.30 p.m. (Israel time), another suicide bomber struck, this time in a crowded area in the heart of the coastal Israeli city of Tel Aviv. The bomber entered a popular coffee shop and detonated powerful explosives that were strapped to his body, blowing out the roof and windows, overturning chairs and tables and scattering glass and other debris in the surrounding streets. The blast wounded 34 people, one of them critically and four others seriously. The Al Aksa Brigades also claimed responsibility for this blast.

On Friday afternoon just before 2 p.m. (Israel time), an 18-year-old Palestinian woman, wearing a belt of explosives around her waist, walked into a supermarket in Jerusalem's Kiryat Hayovel neighbourhood and blew herself up. The blast killed two

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Israelis — one of them a security guard and the other a 17-year-old shopper — and wounded 28 others. The Al Aksa Brigades also claimed responsibility for this blast.

In addition to these four acts of suicidal terrorism, a Palestinian terrorist infiltrated a private home in the Israeli community of Elon Moreh and killed four members of the Gavish family on 28 March. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack.

These attacks come in addition to scores of other more minor attacks and attempted attacks that were thwarted by Israeli security forces in recent days. In one such incident, an Israeli border policeman, Sergeant-Major Constantine Danilov, was killed in a shoot-out after stopping two Palestinian terrorists en route to carry out an attack in Israel. In total, 125 Israelis have been killed by Palestinian terrorists in the month of March alone. Of these, 12 were children, four of them under three years of age.

These acts of terrorism are the latest in the ongoing campaign of Palestinian terrorism that has been detailed in my letters dated 26 March 2002, 18 March 2002 (A/56/880-S/2002/293), 14 March 2002 (A/56/876-S/2002/280), 11 March 2002 (A/56/867-S/2002/257), 8 March 2002 (A/56/864-S/2002/252), 5 March 2002 (A/56/857-S/2002/233), 4 March 2002 (A/56/854-S/2002/222), 27 February 2002 (A/56/843-S/2002/208), 20 February 2002 (A/56/828-S/2002/185), 19 February 2002 (A/56/824-S/2002/174), 11 February 2002 (A/56/819-S/2002/164), 8 February 2002 (A/56/814-S/2002/155), 28 January 2002 (A/56/798-S/2002/126), 22 January 2002 (A/56/788-S/2002/104), 18 January 2002 (A/56/781-S/2002/86), 16 January 2002 (A/56/774-S/2002/73), 11 January 2002 (A/56/771-S/2002/47), 4 January 2002 (A/56/766-S/2002/25), 13 December 2001 (A/56/706-S/2001/1198), 4 December 2001 (A/56/678-S/2001/1150), 30 November 2001 (A/56/670-S/2001/1141), 27 November 2001 (A/56/663-S/2001/1121), 12 November 2001 (A/56/617-S/2001/1071), 5 November 2001 (A/56/604-S/2001/1048), 24 October 2001 (A/56/506-S/2001/1011), 19 October 2001 (A/56/492-S/2001/990), 17 October 2001 (A/56/483-S/2001/975), 8 October 2001 (A/56/450-S/2001/948), 5 October 2001 (A/56/444-S/2001/943), 3 October 2001 (A/56/438-S/2001/938), 24 September 2001 (A/56/406-S/2001/907), 20 September 2001 (A/56/386-S/2001/892), 17 September 2001 (A/56/367-S/2001/875), 7 September 2001 (A/56/346-S/2001/858), 4 September 2001 (A/56/331-S/2001/840), 30 August 2001 (A/56/325-S/2001/834), 27 August 2001 (A/56/324-S/2001/825), 13 August 2001 (A/56/294-S/2001/787), 9 August 2001 (A/56/286-S/2001/780), 8 August 2001 (A/56/280-S/2001/775), 6 August 2001 (A/56/272-S/2001/768), 27 July 2001 (A/56/225-S/2001/743), 26 July 2001 (A/56/223-S/2001/737), 17 July 2001 (A/56/201-S/2001/706), 13 July 2001 (A/56/184-S/2001/696), 3 July 2001 (A/56/138-S/2001/662), 2 July 2001 (A/56/131-S/2001/656), 21 June 2001 (A/56/119-S/2001/619), 19 June 2001 (A/56/98-S/2001/611), 18 June 2001 (A/56/97-S/2001/604), 13 June 2001 (A/56/92-S/2001/585), 11 June 2001 (A/56/91-S/2001/580), 4 June 2001 (A/56/85-S/2001/555), 30 May 2001 (A/56/81-S/2001/540), 25 May 2001 (A/56/80-S/2001/524), 18 May 2001 (A/56/78-S/2001/506), 11 May 2001 (A/56/72-S/2001/473), 9 May 2001 (A/56/69-S/2001/459), 1 May 2001 (A/55/924-S/2001/435), 23 April 2001 (A/55/910-S/2001/396), 16 April 2001 (A/55/901-S/2001/364), 28 March 2001 (A/55/863-S/2001/291), 27 March 2001 (A/55/860-S/2001/280), 26 March 2001 (A/55/858-S/2001/278), 19 March 2001 (A/55/842-S/2001/244), 5 March 2001 (A/55/821-S/2001/193), 2 March 2001 (A/55/819-S/2001/187), 14 February 2001 (A/55/787-S/2001/137), 13 February 2001 (A/55/781-S/2001/132), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-

S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108), and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

Despite Israel's concerted efforts to cooperate with the American envoy, General Anthony Zinni, to achieve a ceasefire and to proceed with the implementation of the Tenet understanding and the Mitchell Committee's recommendations, the Palestinian side has failed to reciprocate with even the most minimal anti-terrorist actions. Not only has the Palestinian leadership failed to take any steps that would contribute to a lessening of violence and terrorism but it has consistently acted to stoke the flames of violence with relentless talk of martyrdom and praise of the heroism of suicide bombers. The Palestinians have made a strategic choice to engage in terrorism and at this time are clearly unprepared to forego this repugnant practice.

Israel calls upon the international community to hold the Palestinian leadership fully and directly responsible for the unrelenting campaign of terrorism that has been visited upon the citizens of Israel and to bring full pressure to bear in compelling the Palestinians to abandon this destructive and ultimately futile campaign and return to the process of negotiations. The Palestinian leadership must undertake immediately to abide by its signed commitments and fulfil its duty to prevent acts of terrorism and resolve all disputes through peaceful means.

In the absence of such steps, Israel has no choice other than to act in accordance with its right to self-defence and to take the action that it deems necessary to defend its citizens from violence and terror. Though our hand remains extended in peace, we will not stand idly by while innocent civilians — women, children, even entire families — are brutally murdered in the streets. Israel will continue to act, as any sovereign nation would act in the face of unrelenting violence, to protect its citizens from the constant threat of violence and terrorism.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter circulated as a document of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 166, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**